

# Employer UPDATE

A PUBLICATION OF THE ARIZONA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

January 2004

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## ASRS recognized in Top 100 pension plans world-wide

The ASRS was recently ranked 88 in a survey of the 200 largest retirement plans in the world, according to Pensions & Investments magazine.

P&I listed the ASRS asset size at \$16.7 billion in the survey. Since then, however, the ASRS portfolio has topped \$20 billion.

## Electronic Transfer Payment System to debut

The Arizona State Retirement System is in the process of creating a new Electronic Transfer Payment System that will enable member employers to submit contributions to the ASRS via the internet.

Electronic Transfer is a safe, secure and efficient way to submit payroll contributions to the ASRS. Although manual check transactions will still be accepted, the ASRS is strongly encouraging use of the new Electronic Transfer Payment System. The system is easy to access, and is just a click away!

This new payment system is part of the State of Arizona's effort to provide efficient and secure on-line transactions.

As soon as the system becomes available, expected to be by Spring, employers will receive a notification with more details and instructions.

## ASRS Annual Report

The Arizona State Retirement System is pleased to release its Certified Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year 2002-03. The 106-page report provides detailed information on Finances, Investments, Actuarial calculations and general Statistics of the agency.

The report meets the standards and requirements for reporting as set forth by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

Statistics in the report reflect the year ended June 30, 2003. They show:

- > ASRS membership totaled 397,088, including 66,440 retirees.
- > The ASRS portfolio totaled \$18.7 billion.
- > The rate of return on the ASRS portfolio was 2.4 percent.
- > The ASRS paid out \$1.2 billion in benefits to retirees and beneficiaries.

In keeping with the State of Arizona's emphasis on electronic business, and cost savings on printing, a limited number of the books were printed.

To view the entire report, please visit the ASRS website at [www.asrs.state.az.us](http://www.asrs.state.az.us)

## Retirement Planning Meetings and Seminars available to your employees!

The Member Services Division of the ASRS announces its Spring Travel Schedule for educational meetings aimed at members contemplating retirement. Please be sure to let your employees know that these Group Meetings and Seminars are available to all members! **Seminars** are designed for members who are between one and five years from retirement, while **Group Meetings** are offered to members who are within one year of retirement. Listed below is the Spring Travel Schedule. Group Meetings & Seminars are also held at ASRS Phoenix and Tucson offices throughout the year. A full schedule is available on our website under the Calendar section.

*Please note that space is limited and reservations are required.*

*Please call Member Services at 1-800-621-3778.*

### 2004 Spring Travel Schedule

March 1 - Yuma - Group Meeting, 4 p.m.	March 25 - Camp Verde - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 2 - Yuma - Seminar, 9 a.m.	March 29 - Flagstaff - Group Meeting, 4 p.m.
March 2 - Yuma - Group Meeting, 2 p.m.	March 30 - Flagstaff - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 3 - Yuma - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	March 31 - Flagstaff - Seminar, 9 a.m.
March 3 - Yuma - Seminar, 1 p.m.	April 2 - Kayenta - Individual Appointments, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
March 4 - Yuma - Group Meeting, 1 p.m.	April 5 - Bullhead City - Group Meeting, 3 p.m.
March 4 - Douglas - Group Meeting, 8 a.m.	April 6 - Kingman - Seminar, 9 a.m.
March 4 - Bisbee - Seminar, 1 p.m.	April 6 - Kingman, Group Meeting, 3 p.m.
March 5 - Willcox - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	April 7 - Kingman, Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 8 - Florence - Group Meeting, 3 p.m.	April 8 - Lake Havasu City - Seminar, 9 a.m.
March 9 - Casa Grande - Seminar, 9 a.m.	April 8 - Lake Havasu City - Group Meeting, 3 p.m.
March 9 - Casa Grande - Group Meeting, 3 p.m.	April 9 - Parker - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 10 - Globe - Group Meeting, 1 p.m.	April 13 - Tuba City - Individual Appointments, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
March 10 - Nogales - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	April 14 - Page - Group Meeting, 10 a.m.
March 10 - Nogales - Seminar, 1 p.m.	April 20 - Winslow - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 11 - Nogales - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	April 21 - Holbrook - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 11 - Superior - Seminar, 3 p.m.	April 21 - Holbrook - Seminar, 2 p.m.
March 18 - Sierra Vista - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	April 22 - St. Johns - Group Meeting, 2 p.m.
March 18 - Sierra Vista - Seminar, 1 p.m.	April 27 - Chinle - Individual Appointments, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
March 19 - Sierra Vista - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	April 28 - Ganado - Individual Appointments, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
March 22 - Prescott Valley - Group Meeting, 3:30 p.m.	April 29 - Window Rock - Individual Appointments, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
March 23 - Safford - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	May 4 - Payson - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 23 - Safford - Seminar, 1 p.m.	May 4 - Payson - Seminar, 2 p.m.
March 23 - Prescott - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	May 5 - Show Low - Group Meeting, 3 p.m.
March 23 - Prescott - Group Meeting, 1 p.m.	May 6 - Springerville - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
March 24 - Prescott - Seminar, 9 a.m.	May 6 - Eager - Group Meeting, 2 p.m.
March 24 - Clifton - Group Meeting, 9 a.m.	

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### Videoconferencing of ASRS Overview presentation now available to MAG-member employers

**Attention Employers:** The Member Services Division of the Arizona State Retirement System is pleased to announce that effective January 1, 2004 we will be working with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) office in offering the one-hour ASRS Overview meeting using the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System. The Overview covers benefits as an active member, service purchase requirements, and retirement calculations.

The ASRS is excited to use this new technology and MAG staff is excited to provide this opportunity to their member agencies. The MAG membership currently consists of the 25 incorporated cities and towns within Maricopa County, the Gila River Indian Community, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Maricopa County, and the Arizona Department of Transportation. Videoconferencing will save time, reduce travel and improve meeting attendance.

If you currently have a partnership with MAG, and have the videoconferencing equipment and would like to set up an Overview meeting, or if you are interested in knowing more about using videoconferencing, please contact Julie Crerand at the ASRS at (602) 240-2143, or by e-mail at [juliec@asrs.state.az.us](mailto:juliec@asrs.state.az.us)

## Employer UPDATE

### ASRS Board of Trustees

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Phoenix, State employees

**ASRS Web site:**  
[www.asrs.state.az.us](http://www.asrs.state.az.us)

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## Employer Notes

### Contribution payment reminder

The ASRS reminds employers that the state retirement system is a Defined Benefit Plan that requires by state statute equal contributions by the member, or employee, and the employer. The current total contribution percentage of 11.4 percent is an equal match of 5.7 percent from the employee and the employer. Employers are not permitted to contribute a larger - or smaller - portion of the required 5.7 percent. If you have any questions, please contact an ASRS Employer Relations staff member.

### Weekly Report set to track legislative session

The ASRS electronic newsletter, Weekly Report, will begin tracking retirement-related legislation again this year, keeping employers up-to-date on the progress of bills.

The report is sent via email each Friday. It was sent periodically while the Legislature was in recess. Now that lawmakers are back, and retirement-related legislation is being introduced, we'll keep you informed on all the issues. We have an email database of more than 600 contacts, primarily employer contacts. If you've received the Weekly Report before, watch for it soon. If you'd like to be included on the list or if you have had a personnel change and need to delete a previous recipient, please send an email request to [michellef@asrs.state.az.us](mailto:michellef@asrs.state.az.us)

### Employer Relations adds staff to better serve you

The Employer Relations Division is pleased to announce the addition of a second Employer Liaison, Chanda Washington.

Chanda has worked as a Benefits Advisor in our Member Services Division the past two years. In her new role as Employer Liaison, she will work to provide information, answers and guidance for member employers. More than 700 separate employers - school districts, cities and towns, state agencies, county governments and colleges and universities - make up the ASRS membership. Chanda joins Rita Anne Johnson as a second Employer Liaison and will enhance the ASRS' ability to serve employers.

You can reach our Employer Relations staff at the numbers listed below.

## Contact Us!

Michele Briggs  
Employer Relations Manager  
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## ASRS Rules process underway

The ASRS is in the process of creating a series of Rules, Policies and Procedures that will assist in overall agency operations.

Creation of Rules follows an extended formal process that includes public comment periods and Board approval.

Among the areas where current rules may be amended, or new rules created, are insurance premium benefits, contributions not withheld and service purchase.

To learn more about the Rules process, and to track the progress of specific rules, we've created a new section on our website.

Also in that section on the web is updated information on legislation affecting the ASRS and retirement issues. You'll be able to track the progress of specific ASRS-related bills this legislative session. There also are links to other websites, including the Arizona Legislature. You can even learn how a bill is created!

To learn the latest, visit the **Legislation & Rules** category off our main homepage!

**[WWW.ASRS.STATE.AZ.US](http://WWW.ASRS.STATE.AZ.US)**

### Employer UPDATE

Employer Update is published periodically for employer members of the Arizona State Retirement System. Comments and questions may be directed to: David Cannella, Communications Manager, ASRS, 3300 N. Central Ave., Suite 1400, Phoenix, AZ 85012. Phone: (602) 240-2016, or 1-800-621-3778.